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## Introduction: Notes from the Bedside

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## INTRODUCTION

### Notes from the Bedside

In this special “Notes from the Bedside” issue of the *Online Journal of Health Ethics*, associate editor, Dr. Peter DePergola invites us to join him for an inside look at the world of clinical bioethics.

In the first essay, “The *Cura Personalis* of Healthcare Delivery: Ethical Reflections on Internal Medicine,” DePergola explores the meaning of care for the whole person, and underscores the mission of compassion as being willing to meet patients at their suffering point.

In the second essay, “Living with Productive Discomfort: Ethical Reflections on Critical Care Medicine,” DePergola considers the theme of deaths and resurrections in light of uncertain outcomes, and captures the pressure on ethicists to always know “the right thing to do.”

In the third essay, “Managing Endings in the Beginning: Ethical Reflections on Neonatal Intensive Care,” DePergola examines the difficult task of determining quality of life for seriously-ill newborns, and highlights the narrative vitalism so often characteristic of those forced to make end-of-life decisions on behalf of those whose lives have just begun.

In the fourth essay, “Dignity and the Life Worth Living: Ethical Reflections on Pediatric Intensive Care,” DePergola navigates the terrain of proxy decision making, and uncovers the hidden tendency of some clinicians to reduce quality of life to physical capability.

In the fifth essay, “The Moral Obligation of Bearing One Another’s Burdens: Ethical Reflections on Surgical Intensive Care,” DePergola analyzes the nature of curing and healing, and offers practical steps for managing families who request medically contraindicated interventions.

In the sixth essay, “Healing without Curing: Ethical Reflections on Palliative Care Medicine,” DePergola evaluates the nature of hope in the chronically ill, and emphasizes the many lessons dying individuals can teach us about living.

In the seventh essay, “The Truths that Make Us Free: Ethical Reflections on Reproductive Endocrinology,” DePergola surveys the concept of therapeutic privilege, and addresses the temptation to respond to biographical questions with biological answers in the context of personal meaning-making.

Finally, in the eighth essay, “The Morality of Medical Miracles: Ethical Reflections on Pediatric Oncology,” DePergola investigates the practical ethics of miraculous healings, and proposes a

four-step approach for working with parents who, for religious reasons, refuse life-saving treatment for children.

**Peter A. DePergola II, Ph.D., M.T.S.**, is Assistant Professor of Bioethics and Medical Humanities and Director of the Center for Ethics, Religion, and Culture at Elms College; Assistant Professor of Medicine at University of Massachusetts Medical School; and Director of Clinical Ethics at Baystate Health. The author of *Forget Me Not: The Neuroethical Case Against Memory Manipulation* (2018), he holds secondary appointments at Tufts University School of Medicine, Sacred Heart University, and the American Academy of Neurology.

Please feel free to contact Dr. DePergola to continue this most intriguing ethical dialogue. The editors and staff of the Online Journal of Health Ethics wish to extend our sincere gratitude to him for sharing his scholarship and service with the Online Journal of Health Ethics.

Sheila P. Davis, PhD, FAAN, FNP-c, LSM-BC  
Editor-in-Chief.